

SENECA MEDIA, INC.

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## Genesee Country Express

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### Looks Around Our Town

## The Bystander

The Livingston County Jail is usually at capacity population...so much so that some prisoners must be "boarded out" to other institutions in the area. This costs money and creates hardships all the way around.

For that reason, county officials are studying various methods of "alternate sentencing" whereby prisoners may remain at home and still pay the price that jail terms bring. There is a working program in nearby Genesee County and our officials are looking there for ideas.

Known as "Genesee Justice," the program in that nearby county has become a model. What makes it different from other alternative programs is its emphasis on attending to the victim. According to officials there, victims are given ample opportunity to explain how they were affected by a crime, sometimes even talking with the criminal. Those who go through the program are told about the realities of the justice system, how prison overcrowding tends to shorten sentences, as well as the relative costs of putting a criminal in prison as opposed to alternative forms of punishment.

It is reported many victims feel an alternative sentence is actually harder than sitting in jail. Some feel it is more constructive than spending time in jail. Others weigh the cost of sending someone

to jail (about \$20,000 a year) as opposed to putting an offender on probation for five years, sending him to counseling and requiring community service (about \$3,000 a year). The alternative method sometimes means a combination of house arrest, probation, meeting with the victim, counseling and community service.

In the five and a half years the program has been in place, more than 1,000 people—mostly first-time offenders—have been sent into the community to renovate churches, clean parks and work in town halls.

A program like this may just solve a problem for Livingston County.

We feel neglected and overlooked. That guy down in Rochester who heads International Dull Folks Unlimited failed to place us on his "Ten Dullest Americans" for 1987. That hurts.

Ron Reagan made it, so did Dan Rather and, get this, Oliver North was third. The super bore event of the year was the Super Bowl. We can buy that, but certainly do challenge the individual selections.

The chairman of the board of the Rochester-based organization didn't have to look so far for some really-really dull people. Like falling asleep early on a Saturday night while "Hee Haw" is on the teevee. Now that's dull—just ask

the lady at our house. Oh well, maybe next year.

Spring training for the boys baseball is just around the corner. It's a great time for the players who sun and tan down south and it's also a great time for the reporters who dig and dig for something off-beat. Like last year when one asked Don Mattingly to comment about his big-buck salary.

"Everybody thinks I've changed. But I'm just a boy from the hills of Indiana. If you don't believe me, ask my butler, Reggie Jackson."

The great American pastime, that's baseball. Besides, when they come north, it's spring and who can knock that change of season.

A Duplicate Bridge Club is very active in Genesee. If you're interested contact Kay or Larry Schede of Dansville for information.

Wayland is the hub of potato growing in the Steuben County area and celebrates each year with a popular festival. Apparently, the crop was not always popular in Europe. In 1651, Frederick William I, Monarch of Prussia, threatened to cut off the noses and ears of all those who refused to plant potatoes. Things have changed.

Get ready to welcome a 29-day February. And have a good day and a nice forever.

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Season of the year that seems to foster that feeling. You feel there's no need to hurry—plenty of time to do those odd jobs, plenty of time. Procrastination just comes naturally along about now, and feeds voraciously on itself, too, unfortunately. All of a sudden it will be spring and the chores inside still undone and those out of doors start to beckon urgently. Well, isn't that the way it is?

Of course, a walk in the woods is not exactly an imperative thing but it did seem like a good idea this particular morning and, bundled warmly, off we went. We was Charlie and me. How exuberant he was, so full of joy and bounce. This, he knew, was no mere jaunt to the woodpile. This was a walk, for real.

How wrong it was, I thought, to qualify a day just by looking out of the window. It was absolutely lovely. Chilly (28 warm degrees)

but fresh and crisp and aromatic as any winter day can be. Birds sang in cheery accompaniment to some bawling calves over the way on a nearby farm, distantly barking dogs sounding a stockade counterpoint.

There was this big crow, too, a very friendly fellow, who seemed to be following us and chatting gregariously the whole time. Was it, I wonder, the same one who had sat on an overhanging branch, watching hungrily, as I fled Duckethud earlier this morning? I had tossed some corn to him, too. Maybe he was saying "thanks" and "lets be friends?"

Charlie kept trying to go in all directions at once, not being able to decide which exciting scent to follow first. (Joey had declined to come in favor of toasting himself by the fire. No cold tramps in the woods for him, no siree.) Charlie does love to explore but not alone. He often tagged after Red, who was an expert at that game, but since she has been gone, Charlie sticks pretty close to home.

It is amazing to find the variety of color to be seen in what you were certain was a dull drab landscape. Faded rose glows along beside creamy white and warm gold-beige. Warm brown mingles among them all. Orange-gold gleams in the willow trees. Leaves underfoot are rosy gold and in the woods there is the lovely green of the Christmas fern and partridge berry plant.

The openness of winter woods allows a whole different perception of old familiar territory. With leaves no longer shutting off vistas, the twisting paths, the winding creek, all seem a new experience. The closed-in secrecy of summer is gone, the mystery gives way to friendliness. And I've been told quail have been seen up here. I wonder, maybe if I sit very still, I might just see a relative of "That Quail, Robert"—maybe.

The walk back to the house was beautiful. The far hills rose blue as could be, with patches of white here and there. (They always seem to have snow over there, or rain, while we stay dry as a bone.) Winter or not, I thought, the landscape still sings. If its song is muted, it is no less lovely.

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